

The PREFACE.

Superstructures, I am abundantly satisfied; and all my ambition is, that I may serve to the great Philosophers of this Age, as the makers and the grinders of my Glasses did to me; that I may prepare and furnish them with some Materials, which they may afterwards order and manage with better skill, and to far greater advantage.

The next remedies in this universal cure of the Mind are to be applied to the Memory, and they are to consist of such Directions as may inform us, what things are best to be stor'd up for our purpose, and which is the best way of so disposing them, that they may not only be kept in safety, but ready and convenient, to be at any time produc'd for use, as occasion shall require. But I will not here prevent my self in what I may say in another Discourse, wherein I shall make an attempt to propose some Considerations of the manner of compiling a Natural and Artificial History, and of so ranging and registering its Particulars into Philosophical Tables, as may make them most useful for the raising of Axioms and Theories.

The last indeed is the most hazardous Enterprize, and yet the most necessary; and that is, to take such care that the Judgment and the Reason of Man (which is the third Faculty to be repair'd and improv'd) should receive such assistance, as to avoid the dangers to which it is by nature most subject. The Imperfections, which I have already mention'd, to which it is lyable, do either belong to the extent, or the goodness of its knowledge; and here the difficulty is the greater, lest that which may be thought a remedy for the one should prove destructive to the other, lest by seeking to enlarge our Knowledge, we should render it weak and uncertain; and lest by being too scrupulous and exact about every Circumstance of it, we should confine and streighten it too much.

In both these the middle wayes are to be taken, nothing is to be omitted, and yet every thing to pass a mature deliberation: No Intelligence from Men of all Professions, and quarters of the World, to be slighted, and yet all to be so severely examin'd, that there remain no room for doubt or instability; much rigour in admitting, much strictness in comparing, and above all, much slowness in debating, and

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shyness in determining, is to be practised. The order all the inferiour services of the lower Faculties, do this only as a lawful Master, and not as a Tyrant, croach upon their Offices, nor take upon it self things which belong to either of them. It must watch the irregularities, but it must not go before them, or prevent them, it must examine, range, and dispose of the bank of the Memory; but it must be sure to make distinction between a well collected heap, and the extravagant Idles Images, which there it may sometimes light upon. The links, upon which the true Philosophy depends, of which the chain is either strong or weak, the whole chain is in danger of being broken, if it begin with the Hands and Eyes, and to proceed on to be continued by the Reason; nor is it to stop there, but to return to the Hands and Eyes again, and so, by a continual circuit from one Faculty to another, it is to be maintained as much as the body of man is by the circulation of the blood, several parts of the body, the Arms, the Feet, the Lungs, &c. Head.

If once this method were followed with diligence, nothing that lyes within the power of human Wit (or is effectual) of human Industry, which we might not only hope for Inventions to equalize those of Columbus, Gilbert Harvy, and of others, whose Names are already famous, Inventors of Gun-powder, the Seamans Compass, the Printing, Graving, Microscopes, &c. but multitudes that for even those discoveries seem to have been the product of the method, though but imperfect; What may not be thereby thoroughly prosecuted? Talking and contention soon be turn'd into labours; all the fine dreams of the universal metaphysical natures, which the luxury of the mind has produc'd, would quickly vanish, and give place to solid Arguments and Works. And as at first, mankind was forbidden the Tree of Knowledge, so we, their Posterity, must